1: Métraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SM3 Caingang SM3

273 the juice of a fern to "make the beer red," is fermented in wooden troughs from 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m.) long made of tree stumps hollowed out by burning and chopping, then closed at both ends with wax. To accelerate fermentation, the beverage is heated every 3d day with red-hot stones and then covered with pieces of bark.

COMMUNICATION

202 The *Caingang* leave messages in symbolic code for those who will follow the same path. A stick with honey indicates where a bees nest has been found; dolls and sticks represent a feast to which some group is being invited; an inclined stick shows the time of day at which some event took place; feathers scattered on the ground tell of a successful hunting party, etc. (Maniser, 1930, p. 790). Lozano (1873, 1:425) stated that to declare war, the *Guayaná* (i. e., the *Caingang*) stuck an arrow into a tree near a path followed by their enemies. [574] A circle of maize cobs on the ground or hanging from a tree was an invitation to a drinking bout.

RELIGION

771 **Religious beliefs.**—The *Aweikoma* conceive the world to be
716 strongly animistic, peopled with ghosts (kuplêng) and spirits (nggiyúdin) of all sorts who dwell in trees, rocks, mountains, stars, winds, and in large and small animals. To meet a spirit is, as a rule, an ominous event. But spirits may be friendly and appear to a man to offer their aid. Those who are assisted in hunting by a guardian spirit share with it the game which they have killed. A man may even adopt a spirit child and place it in his wife's womb.

825 *Aweikoma-Caingang* share the widespread belief that all animals have "masters," that is to say, spirits that control and protect them. Such spirits are willing to give up some of their kin to satisfy men's needs, but are angered if people destroy them wantonly or if hunters refuse an animal "offered" to them.

756 **Shamanism.**—The *Caingang* shaman consults spirits at night, puffing his pipe until he is surrounded by a cloud of smoke. The spirits talk to him in long whistles and tell him where to find a favorable hunting ground or abundant honey. They may also reveal the outcome of an undertaking involving the band.

755 Shamans are also doctors, but this role is less conspicuous among
757 the *Caingang* than elsewhere and is even absent among the *Caingang* of Palmas and of São Paulo. Among the decadent *Aweikoma-Caingang*, observed by Henry (1941, p. 76), shamans only treated members of their immediate family and did not receive a fee for their cures. The shaman knows many magic remedies, generally herbs, the virtues

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
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hunter's skill. A branch from a very thorny bush is burnt and the charcoal mixed with the meat of the animal and eaten "so the hunter's arrows will cut and tear like the thorn."

The bee, since it is a thing that lives and moves, is included in the animistic conceptualization of the world. When the Kaingáng chop out a hive, they say: "Bee, produce! I chopped you out to make beer of you! Yukúi's wife died, and I am making beer of you so that I can cut his hair." Or if they find that the larvae have eaten all the honey, they take the larvae and cry: "Bee, produce! It is I! I am alive! You ate up your honey and that is why you did not produce." And they throw a stick into the hive. After they have taken the honey they rub the sugar over the outside of the tree to show how high up the new hive should extend, and as they do so they exclaim, "Bee, make your honey go up along this way and leave off here" (at the limit of the sugar). The Yukúi mentioned in the formula is an imaginary person whom they use as an excuse for taking the honey. The implication is that since the post-mourning ceremony is extremely important, Bee certainly would not begrudge honey taken under pressure of such a necessity. When a Kaingáng cries, "It is I," he implies that the bee knows him, for such a statement can be intelligible only when the speaker is known.

Behind the requests, commands, and adjurations of the hunting and honey-seeking formulae of the Kaingáng lies not a faith in the magical power of words, but a deep conviction that people will do whatever they are asked and that any reason is sufficient in this society where reasons are unimportant and needs are everything. Whoever asks the Kaingáng to work for him must understand that they are motivated not only by hope of gain but particularly by their fear of refusing. Whoever stands his ground and asserts his rights can move mountains.[25]

Divining

There is scarcely a phenomenon in nature which has not at some time an immediate bearing on the small and insecure cosmos of the Kaingáng. But the feeling that things outside of a man's own body have direct reference to it is reducible to a conception that most such things have a *destructive* reference. On the human level, the Kaingáng partially overcome this threat by extending their bodies through physical and emotional diffusion—the symbol of security is *ka tãñ nyã*, to live in someone else. But everything outside of this social personality, that is to say, members of other extended families, is destructive. In the realm of the supernatural the

[25] This compulsive obedience is at the bottom of the feud victims' attendance at feasts which they know are held solely to entrap them.

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771 787 Kaingáng have attempted the same extension of their positive emotional relationships, but with little success. The supernatural, to them, is an embodiment of terrors; for it is burdened with portents of death, and no matter what benefits the Kaingáng derive from the supernatural, death always dominates their outlook. In *vayú*, divining by belching, the great preoccupation is escape from death; *kumbēdn*, divining by insects in the ashes of the dead, is completely devoted to omens of death; *kóplēgn*, divining with charcoal, is concerned with the location of animals that may be hunted and killed, or with the impending death of human beings, and the meteorological omens of rain, darkness, tempest, and flood are all portents of death.

787 The oral functions of biting, spitting, and blowing form part of supernatural curing techniques, but belching has been elevated to prophetic dignity. Through *vayú*, divining by belching, the Kaingáng obtain many important insights. Any adult who feels that he can divine by belching may take this function on himself, and he or she may be sought out and asked to drink an infusion of *matte*[26] so that his belches may give some information about the chances of death from the enemy, the hunting prospects in a given direction, or the whereabouts of a lost dog. The oracular belch always comes in answer to a request that is usually put to the practitioner in a form like this: "Belch to see whether, if I go to look for my wife and child, the enemy will see me." Then the practitioner drinks the infusion, and if he belches strongly it means "No"; and if weakly, "Yes."

787 302 619 194 *Kumbēdn*, divining by insects, is connected with the exogamous system which the Kaingáng say they possessed far back in ancient times. According to this tradition the Kaingáng were divided into five groups, with each of which was associated a set of personal names and a design with which its members used to paint their bodies.[27] The Kaingáng still use these designs, but their only functions for two hundred years or more have been to protect the wearers against *kuplēng* and supposedly to provide a point of reference for this system of divining by insects. To each group belong certain insects, the presence of which in funeral ashes betokened the impending death of a member of the group. A certain fly and a little butterfly called *soto*, for example, indicated the future death of those who use the dot pattern; and other insects, among them all the different varieties of bees, a wasp, and insects that the Indians call *úpá* and *thathakumbēdn* foretold the death of someone who bore the line pattern.

787 In spite of the precise way in which the Kaingáng formulate it, they

[26] This is the familiar *yerba maté* or *matte* that grows wild in southeastern South America, particularly in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.

[27] See Appendix II for full explanation of this scheme.

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your big heart! Be strong!" and when "the sun heard this, it appeared." If it has been raining a long time, the Kaingáng call to the sun: "Sun, appear; Sun appear; Sun appear; Sun appear."

Summary and Conclusions

As far back as they can remember, the Kaingáng have been a dying people. Hunted by foreign enemies and torn by conflict from within, they lived in the shadow of death, sleeping fitfully beside their campfires, awakening to peer with frightened eyes into the solid darkness around them. Nor did their imaginations conceive a happier life: their afterworld is a somber reproduction of this one. There the people still hunt vendetta enemies, there the honey tastes like water, and there there is no meat to eat but the grubs in rotten wood. Kaingáng folklore is a monotonous repetition of compulsive murder, revenge, and annihilation; they do not tell more than three or four humorous stories altogether—wherever one turns, there is the same gruesome emphasis. The Kaingáng even like the long tales of fights with the Kangdjá in which they were regularly worsted. In our survey of their religion we saw how preoccupied the Kaingáng are with death—not with the hereafter, but with the simple fact of death itself and its effects on the living. It is a striking fact that their most elaborate ritual complex has as its sole object the protection of the living against the dead.[85] It is true that a fair number of the Kaingáng secure guardian spirits, but the emphasis in their supernaturalism is not on the beneficence of the supernaturals but on their vindictiveness if thwarted and on the danger inherent in any contact with them. We have seen how threats from the supernatural stimulate the doubly toned emotion of anger-fear[86] and how this response finds expression in flights from the supernatural and in attacks on it. This flight-fight pattern is but a reflection of the behavior of the Kaingáng Indian in any similar situation on the human level. His reaction to a threat, even though the threat be nothing more than an outburst of violent language always takes the form of attack or flight.

Thus Kaingáng religion is not the expression of an "inner need" in the sense of an attempt of the organism to achieve stability. It is a naïve and pitiful projection of the Kaingáng social outlook and emotions on the supernatural, and it is far more a threat than a buttress to their security. What we see most clearly in Kaingáng supernaturalism is their feeling about their environment—the fundamental distinction between a person's own body (which becomes generalized into the extended family) and all other bodies, which are "different." One's own body provides one with

[85] See p. 181 and Appendix III.

[86] This argument is developed in detail in the author's "The Linguistic Expression of Emotion," *American Anthropologist*, NS, v. 38: 250-256.

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77/ security—it is one's only source. Whatever is outside is potentially destructive to one's body and must be brought close to it; nevertheless, since it is always outside, it remains forever an unknown quantity and a perpetual threat. The history of the reduction in number of the healing techniques among the Kaingáng as reflected in the disappearance of singing and *thfyé* extraction has involved not only a gradual sloughing off of procedures that were dependent on some supernatural being for their effectiveness but also the dropping of treatments not directly applied to the body of the patient or not designed to stimulate his own resources.[37]

The peculiar psycho-physical orientation of the Kaingáng is his own creation, but the type of supernaturalism, animism, through which it finds expression is something which he shares with most of his Indian brethren scattered over the American continents. Everywhere in the New World the fundamental religious outlook is animistic, and the fact that the Kaingáng share this is an accident of their location on the South American continent. What the Kaingáng have done is to utilize this material to give form to their profoundest feelings.

[37] By a treatment not directly applied to the patient's body is meant singing; by treatments not designed to stimulate the patient's own resources are meant extraction of *thfyé* and singing.